Anne's Rock: From Local Folklore to Paranormal Legend
By: Carla Welsh (nee Seitz)

The story of Anne's Rock has changed considerably over the past century. A 1927 newspaper mentions only the tradition of an "Indian maiden who leaped into the creek and drowned." Modern versions add details about a Lenape girl named Anne, a forbidden romance with an English settler, and paranormal activity. It is an interesting example of how local folklore can evolve over time.

Anne's Rock is located on Cobbs Creek, near 2nd Street and Tribet Place, close to where Cobbs Creek meets Darby Creek.

This area does have ancient history and lies directly within the Great Minquas Path corridor, an important Native American trade route used by the Susquehannocks (whom Europeans referred to as the Minquas) during the early to mid-17th century.

According to a 1646 letter by Andries Hudde, the Great Minquas Path crossed Cobbs Creek at what is today in the area of the Blue Bell Tavern. The Blue Bell Tavern is located: 1766 Cobbs Creek Parkway, Philadelphia. During the New Sweden era (1638–1655), this area was known as Molndal and was considered dangerous. Governor Johan Printz had a mill erected there, but the miller did not live onsite for fear of the "wild ones," according to the 1653 Protest, Complaint, and Response letters preserved at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

In 1653, Moherhuting, located just west of Molndal, served as a fishing station for the Swedes and Finns, although they did not reside there at that time. Moherhuting is today's Darby and Colwyn, in between Darby and Cobbs Creeks.

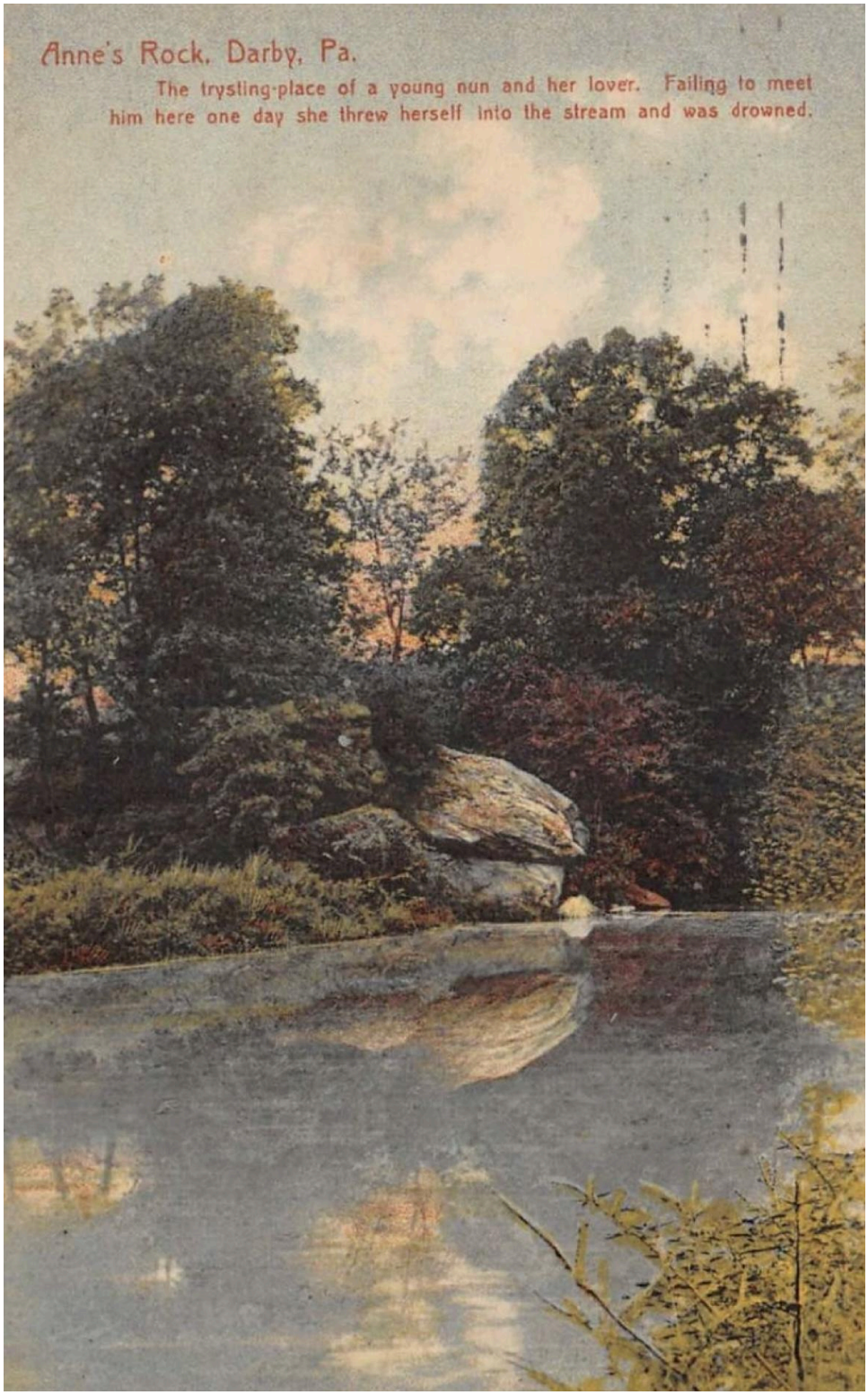
Ann Davis, daughter of John Bethel, was born in Darby in 1705. She later recalled that, as a child, she played with neighboring Native American children who lived nearby in wigwams.

Per Board of Property Minutes, in the late 1600s, Anne's Rock was called the "Great Rock."

Sources:

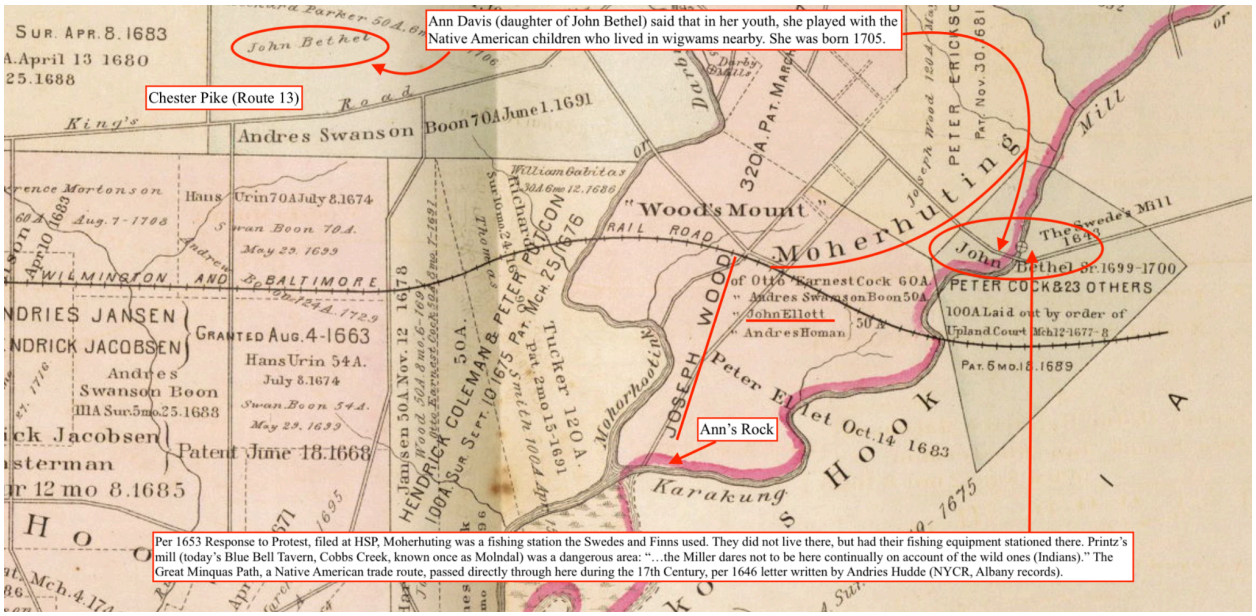
1. 1646 letter written by Andries Hudde in NYCR (Albany), vol. 12, pp. 29–30: https://archive.org/details/documentsrelativ12brod/page/28/mode/2up
2. 1653 Complaint, Protest, Response. Article about and transcribed within: Hans Ling and Dr Kim-Eric Williams, The Swedish Colonial Society Journal, vol. 5, no. 4 (Spring 2015): https://colonialswedes.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/SCSJournal_SPRING2015_v5n4.pdf
3. Benjamin H. Smith, Atlas of Delaware County, Pennsylvania: Darby (1880): https://www.philageohistory.org/rdic-images/view-image.cfm/HBA1880.DelawareCounty.025.Darby
4. William Henry Egle, Minutes of the Board of Property of the Province of Pennsylvania, pp. 76–77: https://archive.org/details/minutesofboardof01penn/page/76/mode/2up

5. John Hill Martin, Chester and Its Vicinity (1877), p. 251: https://archive.org/details/chesteranditsvic00martin/page/250/mode/2up
6. Chester Times (Chester, PA), 22 OCT 1951. Article mentions location of Anne's Rock: "...Ann's Rock on Cobbs Creek, a landmark at South Second Street."
7. Chester Times (Chester, PA), 30 JUN 1927. Article mentions the Native American folklore surrounding Anne's Rock.


Anne's Rock, Darby, Pa.
The trysting-place of a young nun and her lover. Failing to meet
him here one day she threw herself into the stream and was drowned.

Anne's Rock is located in Colwyn, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, on Cobbs Creek. It is located very close to where the confluence of Darby and Cobbs Creeks meet.

Anne's Rock is located on Cobbs Creek in today's Colwyn, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Colorized edit of original photo by the author.


Ann Davis (daughter of John Bethel) said that in her youth, she played with the Native American children who lived in wigwams nearby. She was born 1705.
Chester Pike (Route 13)
John Bethel
Andres Swanson Boon 70A. June 1. 1691
"Wood's Mount"
Moherhuting
Ann's Rock
Karakung
Peter Ellet Oct. 14 1683
PETER COCK & 23 OTHERS
100A Laid out by order of Upland Court Mch 12 1677-8
Pat. 5 mo. 15. 1689
Granted Aug. 4-1663
Hans Urin 54A. July 8. 1674
Patent June 18. 1668
Per 1653 Response to Protest, filed at HSP, Moherhuting was a fishing station the Swedes and Finns used. They did not live there, but had their fishing equipment stationed there. Printz's mill (today's Blue Bell Tavern, Cobbs Creek, known once as Molndal) was a dangerous area: "…the Miller dares not to be here continually on account of the wild ones (Indians)." The Great Minquas Path, a Native American trade route, passed directly through here during the 17th Century, per 1646 letter written by Andries Hudde (NYCR, Albany records).

Benjamin H. Smith, Atlas of Delaware County map. Historical overlay annotated by the author.

CHESTER TIMES—CHESTER, PA., THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 1927

COLWYN MAY LOSE ANN'S ROCK

March of Progress May Rob Borough of Historic Stone

Historic Ann's Rock in Colwyn, a rock along the banks of Darby creek, where tradition says, an Indian maiden a long time ago leaped into the stream and was drowned, may have to be blasted away to keep pace with the march of modern improvement, local historians fear.

Long before Colwyn was even thought of, when the borough was known as the Darby Level, and when Ann's Rock was one of the most obsecure points in Darby township, it was famed as a "diving board" for the "old swimming hole," where the boys and men of the neighborhood were wont to disport themselves in the cooling waters of the Darby creek after a hard day's work in the mills or on the farms which then dotted the township.

The exact story of the ancient rock appears to be vague to the people of the present generation. John Yates, former burgess of the borough and one of the oldest residents of this section whose stock of information regarding the old days of the community is extensive, says he knows little regarding the history of the ancient geological specimen.

Ann's Rock is located on the lower fringe of the borough, below the old Tribit farm which some months ago was sold for building lots, and which is destined to be cut into building lots, at a no remote date.

At a meeting of the Commiss'rs the 17 day of Oct'r, 1691.

Leasly, laid out for him as purchaser quantity 74 foot, the patent thereof being signed by the proprietor. Rent 5s. 8d. English, Requests that the Rent may be no more than the other Purchasers; upon Supposition that it was a mistake It was granted, and ordered it to be 1s 6d p'r annum; the 6d was allowed him to be bought of for 6s to be paid Shoes by Daniel Jones.

John Ellott requesting that we would grant him to take up the swamp and Cripple Lying between his land Called Long Hook and Darby Creek and Mill Creek, and likewise twelve acres more of Cripple lying ajoining to Carcoonhooke Island Bridge and before his Plantation, which we have granted, he forthwith Improving the same and paying yearly one Bushell of Wheat proportionable to 100 acres.

Mill Creek = today's Cobbs Creek

Carcoonhooke/Karraconks (multiple spellings) is on the East side of Darby Creek, below Kingsessing, Philadelphia.

Calcoon Hook is different and was on West side of Darby Creek, located between Darby Creek and Muckinipattus Creek.

added to the said Lott 24 foot more in breadth and the whole to be Rented according to the accomodation of the Ground, it Lying so in a Vally not fit for Building on; the whole was granted at 4s 6d p'r annum English.

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At a Meeting of the Commiss'rs the 7th 9ber, 1691.

Present, Capt. Wm. Markham, Rob't Turner, John Goodson.

A Warrant was made to bring before the Commiss'rs, or any One of them, the Body of R'd Roberts for Cutting wood off the Proprietor's Land.

The Commiss'rs finding Ben. Chambers Very Careless or Wilfully negligent in securing the wood and timber upon the Proprietor's Land according to the trust Reposed in him, It is therefore thought requisite and ordred that Even Oliver have the Care of the wood and timber on all the lands Belonging to the proprietor, His Children or Relations.

Griffith Jones requests to grant him the marsh about his plantation on the side of the little Creek, as it is between the points of fast land Running into the said Marsh; it was granted to run with a straight line from Point to point.

Joseph Wood and John Ellot appearing before the Commiss'rs, Joseph Wood Complaining that the Plantation he now lives on at Darby had no conveniency for Hay but what was surveyed unto John Ellot by Virtue of a Warr't dated the 24th last, the said Ellot Being present, did agree and Consent that the said Woods should have all the marsh or Cripple granted him that Day provided he May have confirmed unto him that part of it from his White oke bounded tree upon Darby Creek down to the Great Rock.

Richard Roberts was brought before us according to the fore-

Egle, Board of Property minutes, PA, vol. 1

Friends' records are so carefully kept that it is not necessary for me to be very explicit concerning families belonging to the Society. But these are not solitary instances of longevity, and as such things are always interesting, and especially so, when the names of the persons mentioned are familiar to one's ears, and connected with our section of the county, I transcribe from some old notes of my grandfather, Dr. William Martin, the following:

"Mrs. Ann Davis, of Delaware Co., in her 85th year, (1790,) the daughter of Mr. Bethel, in the 50th year of his age, by a young wife. She is of a delicate, infirm constitution, and appears to have contended with pulmonary consumption for the last fifty years of her life, and during a greater portion of the time has made use of some preparation of opium. Blessed with a happy, cheerful, equable temper, this amiable woman is remarkably lively and agreeable, and appears exempted from that peevishness and disrelish for everything, that seems too often the accompaniment of old age. Fond of the society of young people, her company is not less eagerly sought after by them. Educated with delicacy and indulgence, she can take but little exercise, but she is never idle, accustomed to habits of industry (which were formerly not neglected as an ingredient of education.) She is always knitting, spinning, or performing some other necessary duty that domestic wants require. She lives with her three daughters, all single, who, by an affectionate attention in discharging the offices of filial duty, have rendered her life agreeable and happy. She lost all of her teeth by the time she was 60, many coming away apparently sound. Her grandfather was near 90 when he died. She was born in the

sound. Her grandfather was near 90 when he died. She was born in the place where Darby now is, and remembers playing with the Indian children of the neighboring wigwams. July 23, 1795, Mrs. Davis died, being 90 years old, less 3 months.

Ann Davis (nee Bethel) was the daughter of John Bethel who owned Darby Mills in Darby, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

She was born 1705 and died 1795.

She said she was born in Darby and played with "Indian children of the neighboring wigwams."

So she probably played with the children around 1710–1720.

John Hill Martin, Chester and Its Vicinity, Delaware County (1877)